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ABSTRACT

Part of a resource package to assist local education agency personnel in improving the quality of instruction and supportive services to students with special needs in vocational education programs, the fourth of nine instructor guides introduces procedures for developing an individualized plan for the special student. It is explained that the individualized vocational plan identifies learner performance level(s) and pinpoints areas where additional instruction and special support services are needed. Each of the major components of the individualized plan is discussed, with examples provided to illustrate how the plan is to be prepared. The procedures in this guide are noted to be compatible with the individualized education program. Included are a sample individualized vocational plan form and an instructional materials checklist. (SBH)

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INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE

PREPARING AN INDIVIDUALIZED VOCATIONAL PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Collecting data on the student's present level of performance (Guide 3) represents the first step in developing an individualized vocational plan for the special needs student. The second step, that of formulating the student's vocational plan based on current level of performance information, requires answers to the following questions:

1. What are the needs of the learner in relation to the goals and objectives of the vocational course?
2. What special strategies and/or resources appear to be necessary to ensure student success?
3. What criteria will be used to determine student success?
4. How will student success be measured?

Procedures for addressing these questions will be offered in this guide. The information presented herein should assist the assessment-planning team in preparing an individualized vocational plan for the student with special needs.

GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS

The Individualized Vocational Plan (IVP) is basically a written plan of action for the special student.* The plan itself consists of four major components:

- A statement of the student's present level(s) of performance.
- A description of annual goals and short-term objectives for the student.
- An identification of special services/assistance needed.
- A listing of the criteria to be used in, and a schedule for, evaluating student progress.

Each of the above components of the plan will be defined within this section, along with examples to illustrate how the plan is to be completed. Strategies for organizing planning efforts will precede this discussion.

A review of a sample format for preparing the student's IVP may be helpful before proceeding through the following information. This sample can be found in Example Document #1.

I. Steps in Organizing the Student's IVP

As suggested in Guide 3, the learner's IVP is to be developed by the assessment-planning team, which consists of the persons responsible for collecting information on the student's present level of performance. In addition to these persons, the parents and the student should be involved in IVP development. At a minimum, then, an IVP team should include: 1) the student's vocational instructor, 2) a local administrator responsible

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*As presented herein, the Individualized Vocational Plan (IVP) is for the student who: 1) is enrolled in a secondary or postsecondary vocational course and 2) has been identified as having a handicap or a disadvantage which appears to limit opportunities for successful performance in the vocational setting. Persons familiar with Public Law 94-142, which requires the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each handicapped learner, will find the procedures for IVP development to be in accord with the provisions of this federal mandate.

for supervising vocational and/or special education, 3) the parents, 4) the student, and 5) the person responsible for providing special educational services. This fifth person would be selected on the basis of student need(s). If, for example, a student is in need of special reading instruction, the remedial reading specialist may be appropriate. Or, if the student is in need of counseling services, the guidance counselor or the school psychologist may be considered.

To recap much of what has been said and to place instructor and team member roles within a planning framework, let's take a look at the steps involved in IVP development. Areas of personnel input will be suggested within each of the sequential planning steps in Figure 1.

Figure 1 -- IVP Development

IVP STEPS	PERSONNEL INPUT
1. Identify and Refer Student with Special Needs in Vocational Education (Guide 2).	1. Student in need of special help is referred to appropriate person (e.g., vocational counselor) by instructor, parents, student or other educational personnel. The person receiving the student referral initiates action to a) notify parents and student of the referral and b) organize the assessment-planning team for the purposes of determining student needs and developing an individualized vocational plan for the student.
2. Assess Present Level of Performance (Guide 3)	2. The assessment-planning team determines strategies for collecting information on the student's current performance level. Decisions are made as to the information needed and how it is to be collected. This information may be collected individually and reported during Step 3. Or, the team may decide to collect information on an individual basis and then meet collectively to prepare a team summary report of student needs before Step 3 occurs.
3. Prepare the Student's IVP (Guide 4)	3. The assessment-planning team, the parents of the student and the student meet to develop the Student's Individual Vocational Plan.

II. Contents of an IVP

As can be noted in Example Document #1, the student's IVP is to include statements on the learner's present level of performance, annual goals, short-term objectives, time-lines for measuring student progress, along with an indication of the amount and type of special services/assistance to be provided for the learner.

Let's now take a closer look at the major components of the IVP and see how each is to be developed:

A. *Annual Goals*

Information on the student's current performance level is to be condensed into a brief statement. This statement should include the major findings of the assessment-planning team (Guide 3). Figure 2 provides an illustration of how the assessment information could be described in an IVP.

Figure 2 -- Sample Present Level of Performance Statement

PRESENT LEVEL(S) OF PERFORMANCE:

Academic: Mike's reading at approximately the 9th grade level. While the reading level doesn't appear to be a major area for concern, his study habits seem to be. Sophomore English and History instructors stated that Mike appeared disinterested in both subjects, often came to class unprepared and frequently failed to complete assignments on time.

Personal-Social: Mike has been found to be very quiet in class. His previous teachers note that he seldom spoke during class and appeared reluctant to participate in small group classroom activities.

Prevocational/Vocational: Mike worked full-time at H. Morgan Seafood during the summer and plans to work there part-time on the weekends. His employer says Mike is a dependable and hard-working employee. Mike wants to work as a cabinet worker or as a carpenter for his industrial cooperative education (ICE) experience. But on his ICE math pretest (9/14/78), Mike was unable to read the ruler or work with fractions.

B. *Annual Goals*

The annual goals are statements which indicate where the student should be at the end of the school year. Each goal statement is developed by comparing the student's present level of performance in an area of concern with the desired level of performance. An example of how the learner's needs may be translated into a goal statements is provided in Figure 3. This example is based on Mike's present level of performance statement in Figure 2.

Figure 3 -- Sample Annual Goals Statement

ANNUAL GOAL(S):

By the end of the school year Mike will:

1. Demonstrate competence in spraying and wiping stain, spraying lacquer, stacking of wet parts, hanging doors, attaching hardware and assembling lazy susans.

2. Read a ruler and perform math operations at a level typically required in a cabinet shop.

3. Improve study habits and spend more time in preparation for class.

4. Increase reading comprehension.

The annual goals described in the learner's IVP do not, of course, represent an entire listing of the instructional goals for the school year. Rather, the goals listed in the IVP merely signify areas of special consideration; areas where special services are felt to be necessary in order to improve learner performance. The annual goals statement is to be related directly to learner needs, as identified in the present level of performance section of the IVP.

C. *Short-Term Objectives*

Once the annual goals are stated, the next step involves converting these goals into measurable short-term objectives. Or, to put it another way, the goals will need to be broken-down into related task statements. Short-term objectives may be defined as a series of performance-oriented task statements which represent the steps between the student's present level of performance and the desired level as stated in an annual goal.

In reference to Mike's plan, one of the goals was to read a ruler. An example short-term objective may be, "Following one week of instruction and practice, the learner will measure 10 objects to the nearest 1/16th of an inch."

If the reader is in the process of preparing a course curriculum for a vocational program and interested in obtaining lists of task statements, the following sources should be helpful:

- Contact the Department of Vocational Education in the state office.
- Ask for task statements from local vocational program advisory committee.
- Contact the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.
- Review procedure, service or process manuals prepared by local business and industry.
- Examine the Dictionary of Occupational Titles and/or the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

The goals of the vocational program will likely determine which of these sources is most helpful.

Let's now see how the short-term objectives are to be specified.

D. *Performance Criteria, Evaluation Procedures and Schedule*

Each short-term objective should include a standard or *criterion* which specifies the minimum level a student must achieve to master the objective. If, for example, a task is to improve student accuracy, the criterion may be stated as a percent, e.g., "measure 5 objects to the nearest 1/16th of an inch with 100% accuracy." When time is to be used as a criterion, then a statement such as, "complete a sales slip in 2 minutes" would be appropriate. Oftentimes, the aim is to have the student perform a chain of behaviors. Therefore, the criterion can be stated by the number of trials, e.g., "correctly record a telephone order five out of six trials."

In all of the above cases, the procedure for *evaluating* student performance is direct observation. This approach requires only that objectives are written in measurable terms and that either through a teacher-made test or by observation a student's performance is measured (Blankenship, 1977). If direct measurement is used then a statement to that effect should appear on the student's vocational plan.

A *schedule* for evaluating student progress is also to be identified on the student's plan. If direct performance measures are used, student progress should be assessed daily, or in at least a weekly or bi-weekly

basis. In doing so, the instructor can use these data to monitor student progress and adjust her/his teaching strategies to insure student success (Lilly, 1977). A format for recording student progress data will be offered in Guide #7 (Monitoring the Student's Individualized Vocational Plan). For purposes of the individualized plan, however, all that is needed is a statement indicating when student progress is to be measured (i.e., daily, weekly).

Figure 4 offers two examples of short-term objectives, with criteria, evaluation procedures and schedule for Mike, the Industrial Cooperative Education student. The sample plan format illustrated in Example Document #1 is used in these examples.

Figure 4 -- Sample Objectives, Criteria, Evaluation/Schedule

Short-Term Objectives	Criteria	Evaluation/Schedule
1. Increase the amount of time spent in preparation for class.	The student is to designate a regular study period in the evening and spend at least one hour per night studying.	The student will keep a log of time spent studying and subjects studied for a two week period. The parents will check Mike's documentation and verify its accuracy on a weekly basis.
2. Demonstrate competence in sanding cabinets with a belt sander and finish sander.	Criteria will be established by the employer using acceptable standards in the use of equipment/materials, quality of work completed and time requirements for finishing the task.	Vocational coordinator will work with employer in specifying the criteria and timelines for evaluation. Both coordinator and employer will observe student performance and evaluate according to specified criteria.

E. *Special Services/Assistance to be Provided*

This section is, perhaps, the most important element in the student's IVP. This is the portion of the plan which identifies the type of special services and/or assistance needed to help the student succeed in a vocational setting. These special supportive services may be in the form of staff help, material/media/equipment resources, and/or community service agency aid. For example, a mildly handicapped student enrolled in a regular vocational program may require special instruction from a special education teacher. This assistance may be within a special resource room, or the special educator could help the student within the regular classroom setting, or both strategies may be needed. Or, a disadvantaged learner may be deficient in math skills and could profit from remedial instruction by a specialist in this area. Perhaps, a special text or related materials may be all that is necessary. In Mike's case (Figures 2, 3 and 4), the I.C.E. coordinator worked closely with the parents on study skills, a math tutor and the coordinator worked on improving the math skills and special reading instruction was provided by a reading specialist.

If special services or devices (e.g., large print texts, equipment modifications, language interpreter) appear necessary for the student to complete a given course, or courses, the feasibility of their acquisition should be discussed with the appropriate authorized person or persons prior to the time when the IVP is developed (Hull, Parrish and Hill, 1977).

For some excellent suggestions on removing, modifying and coping with architectural barriers see Gollay and Doucette's article in School Shop, April 1978.

When considering special materials, an assessment of their appropriateness should be conducted prior to actual purchase, or if teacher prepared, prior to final revision. Example Document #2 offers a checklist for evaluating instructional materials.

III. Beyond Developing the Individualized Plan

The activities and information within Guides 3 and 4 lead to the actual development of an individualized plan for the special needs student. This plan is, of course, to be completed before the student enters the vocational program and/or within the first two to three weeks of the school year. This type of planning will be of limited value unless provisions are made for continued review and update. As the student progresses through the instructional program, modifications of the original plan are likely to be needed. The nature of these modifications will, in large part, be determined by student progress being made toward stated short-term objectives. Therefore, the vocational instructor will need to collect data on student progress and use these data to recommend, if and when necessary, any changes needed to be made in the students IVP. Procedures for monitoring student progress as well as suggestions for collecting progress data are presented in Guides #5, 6 and 7.

FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

For additional information on topics related to developing individualized plans for student with special needs in vocational programs see:

Albright, Len and Phelps, L. Allen. Teaching Special Needs Students: A New Challenge. Industrial Education, October, 1977, pp. 26-31.

Blankenship, Colleen. Illinois Interim Resource Manual for Preparing Individualized Education Programs. Springfield, Illinois: Specialized Educational Service Department, Illinois Office of Education, August, 1977.

Cegelka, Patricia T. and Phillips, Misha W. Individualized Education Programming at the Secondary Level. Teaching Exceptional Children, Spring, 1978, pp. 84-87.

Gollay, Elinor and Bensberg, Gerald J. Making Better Use of Support Services. School Shop, April, 1978, pp. 54-56.

Gollay, Elinor and Doucette, John F. How to Deal with Barriers in Schools. School Shop, April, 1978, pp. 86-89.

Hayes, Ruth. The What, Who, How, etc., of the IEP. School Shop, April, 1978, pp. 57, 60.

Hull, Marc E.; Parrish, Linda H. and Hill, Owen J. Individualized Education Programs. Industrial Education, December, 1977, pp. 26 30.

Kroth, Roger. Parents-Powerful and Necessary Allies. Teaching Exceptional Children, Spring, 1978, pp. 88-90.

Lilly, M. Stephen. Evaluating Individualized Education Programs. Chapter 5 in Torres, Scottie (ed.), A Primer on Individualized Education Programs for Handicapped Children. Reston, Va.: Foundation for Exceptional Children, 1977, pp. 26-30.

Phelps, L. Allen and Lutz, Ronald J. Career Exploration and Preparation for the Special Needs Learner. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977.

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #1

INDIVIDUALIZED VOCATIONAL PLAN

Student's Name _____ Initial Team Planning Date _____

IVP Coordinator's Name _____ Date for Team Review/Revision _____

PRESENT LEVEL(S) OF PERFORMANCE

Academic:

Personal-Social:

Prevocational/Vocational:

SERVICES/ASSISTANCE TO BE PROVIDED FOR CURRENT YEAR

Type	Date Services Begin	Duration

ANNUAL GOALS

OBJECTIVES, CRITERIA, EVALUATION, AND SCHEDULE

Short-Term Objectives	Criteria	Evaluation/Schedule

IVP TEAM MEMBERS' SIGNATURES:

_____

(Name) (Title)

_____

_____

_____

_____

EXAMPLE DOCUMENT #2

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CHECKLIST*

Directions: Commercially-produced or teacher-prepared materials can be evaluated using the review criteria listed below. Both occupational and special educators should assess the material prior to purchase or final revision (if teacher prepared).

Title: _____ Evaluators: _____

Media Type (film, book, etc.): _____

Source: _____ Date: _____

		Rating *Lo*		*Hi*	Inappropriate Criteria *(check)*
1.	Is the instructional material potentially interesting for the learner(s) for whom it is intended?	1	2	3	_____
2.	Are the skills/knowledges/attitudes it will develop appropriate for the learner?	1	2	3	_____
3.	Are the skills/knowledges/attitudes it will develop consistent with the instructional objectives of the unit?	1	2	3	_____
4.	Does the material contain explicitly stated goals so that students and teachers alike will be able to evaluate their performance?	1	2	3	_____
5.	To what extent is the material controlled to provide the appropriate reinforcement for correct responses and near correct responses?	1	2	3	_____
6.	To what extent can students actively participate with the instructional material?	1	2	3	_____
7.	To what extent are the materials useful with both individuals and groups?	1	2	3	_____
8.	Are the directions for using the material too complex for teachers and/or learners to readily understand?	1	2	3	_____

*Adapted from Phelps, L. Allen and Lutz, Ronald J. Career Exploration and Preparation for the Special Needs Learner. Boston, Mass.: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977, pages 299-301. Adapted with permission from authors and publisher.

		Rating (Lo → Hi)			Inappropriate Criteria *(check)*
9.	To what extent is the material flexible enough to permit additions, deletions, or modification of content?	1	2	3	_____
10.	To what extent is the material portable and readily available from the distributor or manufacturer?	1	2	3	_____
11.	To what extent has the material been pre-tested, pilot tested, and evaluated with different special needs populations?	1	2	3	_____
12.	To what extent does the material permit the teacher to evaluate diagnostically a student's level of performance to determine where the learner should begin?	1	2	3	_____
13.	Will the material have to be adapted to another media form (e.g., braille, enlarged print, etc.) for visually handicapped learners?	1	2	3	_____
14.	Will the material have to be adapted to another media or format for orthopedically handicapped learners (e.g., self-instructional packages for homebound instruction)?	1	2	3	_____
15.	Will the material have to be adapted to another media (e.g., cassette/audio tapes to print) for hearing impaired learners?	1	2	3	_____
16.	Is the material sufficiently durable for classroom or lab use?	1	2	3	_____
17.	Are sufficient and appropriate examples or applications used to realistically present the information?	1	2	3	_____
18.	Other considerations/criteria:				

19. DISPOSITION *(Check one)*:

_____ Do not purchase and/or use

_____ Purchase and/or use "as is"

_____ Purchase and/or use after modification